

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 197576

CARACAS FOR REG 18 DEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, CO

SUBJECT: COCAINE SMUGGLING VIA BANANA BOATS

REF: DEA HQS WASH DC 12971; BOGOTA 7793

1. REFTEL CONCERNS MEETINGS BETWEEN DEA S/A NORSWORTHY AND JOHN TATCHER, PRESIDENT OF BANANA SUPPLY COMPANY, AND WITH CARLOS PEREZ, VICE PRESIDENT OF TURBANO BANANA CORPORATION. BOTH COMPANY OFFICIALS EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT COCAINE SMUGGLING FROM COLOMBIAN PORTS. MR. PEREZ CONVEYED THE INTEREST OF HIS COMPANY'S PRESIDENT, DR. RODRIGO JIMENEZ MEDILLIN, WHO ALSO IS PRESIDENT OF UNION DE BANAEROS IN ANTIOQUIA PROVINCE, COLOMBIA IN RESOLVING THE COCAINE SMUGGLING PROBLEM. THE GOVERNOR OF ANTIOQUIA PROVINCE, GABRIEL JAIME ARANGO RESTREPO HAD OUTLINED SPECIFIC STEPS TO INCREASE CONTROL ILLICIT DRUGS AT PORTS IN ANTIOQUIA PROVINCE IN A LETTER TO DR. JIMENEZ WHICH WAS PASSED TO S/A NORSWORTHY BY MR. PEREZ.

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2. S/A NORSWORTHY SUGGESTED SEVERAL COMMENDABLE ACTIONS THAT DR. JIMENEZ COULD TAKE INCLUDING CONTACT WITH DEA, BOGOTA, DAS AND DENIAL OF SHORE LEAVE FOR NON-U.S. CREWMEN ON COMPANY BOATS WHILE IN U.S. WATERS. HE FURTHER SUGGESTED THAT DR. JIMENEZ EXECUTE ANY INFLUENCE

WHICH HE MIGHT HAVE WITH HIGHER U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO ALLOW DEA TO OPEN ADDITIONAL DISTRICT OFFICES WITHIN THE COUNTRY OF COLOMBIA. WE ASSUME THAT THIS SUGGESTION WAS MADE WITHOUT FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE EMBASSY'S NEGOTIATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT WITH THE GOC. BACKGROUND BRIEFING ON THE SUBJECT OF DEA EXPANSION IN COLOMBIA INCLUDING THE MODE AND MANNER OF SUCH POLICY DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE EMBASSY AND THE GOC WILL BE PROVIDED TO S/A NORSWORTHY BY DEA WASHINGTON TO CLARIFY CONFUSION ON THE ISSUE.

3. THE OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS MADE IN REFTEL ARE VERY WORTHWHILE AND THE MIAMI DEA OFFICE SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR ITS RAPID AND SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM SHIPOWNERS WHO OBVIOUSLY DESIRE TO COOPERATE IN SUPPRESSING ILLICIT DRUG SMUGGLING FROM COLOMBIA.

4. PLEASE KEEP US ADVISED OF PROGRESS IN DISCUSSING VIABLE MEANS OF ASSISTING THE SHIPPING LINES IN QUESTION. PERHAPS, SOME OF THE IDEAS UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR INCREASING SECURITY ON GRAN COLOMBIAN LINES CAN BE ADOPTED FOR THE AFOREMENTIONED BANANA CARRIERS.

5. A SUBSTANTIVE REPLY TO THE EMBASSY'S EARLIER INQUIRY CONCERNING ASSISTANCE FOR THE GRAN COLOMBIANA LINE IS UNDER PREPARATION. KISSINGER

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